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23 January 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
RELATING TO NATIONAL SECURITY

State Dept. review completed

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[redacted]

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USSR - Southeast Asia: Moscow appears concerned that recently publicized US air strikes in Laos may call forth Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese counteractions which could lead to a dangerous military escalation.

On 21 January the Soviets published the draft of a note to the US and the three Laotian factions which expressed support for Souphanouvong's routine call on 17 December for a new Geneva conference. In addition, the draft urged the leaders of all three Laotian "political forces" to refrain from actions which would aggravate the situation and complicate the tripartite Lao negotiations. This could be intended as an oblique warning to the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese to avoid moves which might provoke greater US intervention in Laos.

The note was in the form of a draft message from the Geneva cochairmen and, as in previous instances, the Soviets published their draft without waiting for a British comment. This is the first time, however, that the Soviets have resorted to this device to focus international attention on Laos, since they threatened to renounce their cochairman responsibilities for Laos last July.

Despite Soviet concern over the possibility of escalation, Moscow feels obliged to continue its

(continued)

vigorous verbal support of North Vietnam, in part because of pressures generated by competition with Peiping in Southeast Asia. In recent letters to North Vietnam and Communist China, Gromyko endorsed their protests against US actions "involving troops of its South Korean puppets in the aggressive war against the South Vietnamese people." Gromyko stated that the USSR "as before, will render every support and assistance" to the people of Vietnam.

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Cuba: [Fidel Castro may be looking beyond the Western Hemisphere for quick "revolutionary" achievements to enhance his international prestige]

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[Castro is irked because the US did not respond to his earlier "rapprochement feelers." He seems dissatisfied with the progress of revolution in Latin America, and is impatient to demonstrate to the world that a small nation like Cuba can make an impact on world history]

[Castro is said to be intrigued with the idea of participating in the "liberation struggles" in Africa. He is described as anxiously awaiting the return of Che Guevara with a firsthand report on Africa's revolutionary potential]

[Guevara's current tour of Africa has taken him to Algeria, Mali, Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea, Ghana, and Dahomey. He has offered Cuba's "moral support" to the Congo rebels, as well as scholarships and training to some African nationalist groups, notably to the leftist-oriented Angolan faction. Cuba sent arms and military personnel to Algeria during the October 1963 Algeria-Morocco crisis.]

[Havana is continuing to support Latin American subversives, however, but focusing on those countries--Venezuela, Guatemala, and Colombia--where it believes prospects over the long run are brightest and where the insurgents have demonstrated a willingness to undertake terrorist activity.]

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NOTES

West Germany - France: Chancellor Erhard has returned from Paris optimistic that his talks with President de Gaulle have brought a genuine improvement in Franco-German relations, according to initial reporting on the meeting. De Gaulle did not make a contentious issue of the MLF, and Erhard appears to feel that he has the French leader's general endorsement of German initiatives on unification and on European political unity. If Erhard's view of the session is borne out, he stands to gain considerable political stature in Bonn.

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

The United States Intelligence Board on 22 January 1965 approved the following national intelligence estimates:

NIE 11-5-65, "Soviet Economic Problems and Prospects." [redacted]

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NIE 42/14.2-65, "The Korean Problem." [redacted]

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